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Lack of support, both in funds and in philosophic commitment, is responsible for the limited extent of educational research and development throughout the nation. More convincing results of educational research and more adequate dissemination of findings are needed to enable the educational community to use those findings as the basis for positive educational change. To assist in the improvement of educational research evaluation techniques and to stimulate constructive educational innovations and their applications in the nation's schools and colleges, a new planning, research, and evaluation activity has been initiated by the U.S. Office of Education. This new activity will consolidate the Bureau of Research, the Office of Program Planning and Evaluation, and the National Center for Educational Statistics and will be directed by a Deputy Assistant Secretary for Educational Planning, Research, and Evaluation. (JK)

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STRENGTHENING EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT*

Remarks by James E. Allen, Jr.
Assistant Secretary for Education
and
U.S. Commissioner of Education

It is a privilege to be with you today to share in your conference. This gathering has tremendous potential for the future development of American education, for as key figures in Government, industry and the academic community and as leaders in educational research and development, you can provide powerful leverage for raising the quality of our instructional system.

There is no need for me to give a sales talk to this group on the importance of research and development in the field of education. Although traditional ways and methods still persist, and although there is still resistance to change, the winds of change in education have never blown so strongly as they now do. It is obvious that if all this movement is not to result in a shaking up that settles back into a mere rearrangement of the old, or in a "change for change's sake" approach that may or may not produce constructive results, the research and development activities throughout the Nation are going to have to be strengthened.

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*At Conference on American Education, sponsored by the National Network of Regional Educational Laboratories, Washington, D.C. July 17, 1969, 12:00 p.m. at the Sheraton Carlton Hotel.

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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The approach that may be most helpful in securing the degree and quality of research we know to be necessary is to consider the question of why, in a situation, every aspect of which emphasizes the importance of a vigorous, widespread program of research and development, do we not yet have it.

This is not to disparage the progress attained in educational research and development. Measured against the past, the progress has been tremendous, but placed in the perspective of the future, it is too little and too slow.

The basic reason is lack of support -- the support of sufficient money and the support of philosophical commitment. This answer, of course, only produces the further question of why have we not been able to secure the necessary support? -- and this brings us, as the young people say, down to the "nitty-gritty".

In all frankness, we must acknowledge that a major cause for the difficulty in securing support for research and development is that our efforts thus far have not produced convincing results. Whether the judgment be fair or not, too many of those who play a part in determining the support for research and development in the field of education are not sufficiently sold on its value to give it full and enthusiastic backing.

There is, of course, something of the vicious circle here -- more support would produce better results which would bring more support -- and around we go. But a waiting game of this sort cannot answer the urgencies of our educational needs. We must in some manner produce the convincing results that will build an active constituency for a much larger program of research and development.

Since Sputnik and the National Defense Education Act, legislation at both the State and Federal levels has, in varying degrees, emphasized research. This emphasis has produced some exciting programs but despite vigorous efforts of such groups as the National Network of Regional Educational Laboratories, the Research and Development Centers and other formal efforts, their application has been severely limited and their effect almost obscured in the "business-as-usual" atmosphere that exists in too many of our schools.

A recent national survey of school practices and attitudes, asking school administrators and their staffs to identify recent educational research and development results or products that have had or will have widespread influence on school practices throughout the Nation, found two-thirds of the respondents unable to identify even one such advance. The vast majority of school systems surveyed had had no experience with nongraded sequences, programmed instruction, modular scheduling, instructional television, or team teaching -- all of which are now familiar, well-tried parts of instructional practice.

It would seem that much of what we have so laboriously learned about educational theory and practice has been -- to say the least -- under-advertised, poorly packaged and thinly distributed.

Thus, our first goal must be to get the good, new ideas and practices into use -- and get them there quickly.

Equally important in producing convincing results is to bring research and development from the periphery of educational endeavor into the heart of it, where it belongs. In both the facilities and personnel of research and development programs there has been a tendency to make do or adapt rather than to seek the specialized and targeted approach that will know how to ask those questions about our schools that will reveal the basically important needs and then proceed to find the answers. This kind of approach, as it produces research that can stand clearly and convincingly as a foundation for educational change, will help to dispel the criticism of those who see research as too much involved with the latest technological fad or whim of the moment.

Of great importance also to building a constituency for research is the sharpening of our evaluation techniques. Here education suffers, for so much of its good is immeasurable. But though difficult, evaluation is certainly not impossible and the educational community must be willing to cooperate in both creating and using procedures that will demonstrate the usefulness of new methods and programs.

Concentrating our efforts on dissemination, improvement of research techniques and practices, and evaluation, we can build a constituency for research that will give us the increased support so desperately needed.

I know that the adjective "desperate" has been so over-used as to somewhat diminish its effect, but in speaking of the need for educational research its full meaning is certainly justified. The broader concepts of education's purpose that are shaping our efforts today are creating problems so new and different that past experience alone can no longer be a reliable guide.

In saying these things to you, I am also saying them to myself, for in assuming the Office of Commissioner of Education and Assistant Secretary, I do not envision my task as merely administering a collection of programs in a status quo fashion. Rather, I see the future of the Office of Education and the whole scope of Federal educational involvement as being dedicated to a strong advocacy for relevance and change, and to the development of a nationwide strategy for the improvement of every level of our educational enterprise.

Since I believe that such advocacy and such a strategy are dependent in the most fundamental way on research and development, I have been considering how this program of the Office of Education could be more effective both in its specialized function and as an agent for gathering increased support for the whole effort of educational research and development throughout the Nation.

A study has been made of the organizational structure of the Office of Education and the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Education to determine how we might synthesize our efforts to achieve greater impact on current instructional practice and assure improvements in the future.

Out of this study has come a decision to make certain organizational changes designed to enhance our internal operations and to broaden the Office of Education's capacity for stimulating constructive innovations and the application of those innovations in our schools and colleges.

The planning, research, and evaluation units within the Office of Education will be consolidated into a single unit under the newly established position of Deputy Assistant Secretary for Educational Planning, Research, and Evaluation. This new enterprise will bring together the Bureau of Research, the Office of Program Planning and Evaluation, and the National Center for Educational Statistics. To these activities will be added -- sometime in the near future -- a special dissemination unit that will focus on transmitting information about new educational materials and practices.

The new Deputy Assistant Secretary will report directly to me and will have the basic responsibility of making the Office of Education a strong advocate of change and relevance in education. Pending announcement of the appointment to this newly instituted position, I have asked Dr. James J. Gallagher, Associate Commissioner in charge of our Bureau of Education for the Handicapped, to take on the

responsibility of organizing the new Planning, Research, and Evaluation activity.

Thus organized, the research and development program of the Office of Education will be, I hope, the source and inspiration of Federal action that will encourage research and development by supporting projects that are focused on immediate, urgent educational needs, by participating in efforts to increase consumer confidence in the value of and need for strengthening research and development, and by seeking greater financial support.

Despite the discouragement of the stubborn persistence of the statistic which shows less than one percent of the educational dollar being spent on research and research-related activities, I believe that optimism is justified. Strong, almost irresistible forces for change are at work and if we can combine the strength of these forces with the strength of a revitalized and broadly applied program of research and development, we will see that percentage figure rise to a more appropriate and realistic level.

In conclusion, let me assure you that the Office of Education will be concentrating on the strengthening of not only its own program of research and development but also on the cooperative nationwide effort that will remove those restrictions and conditions in research and development which are now forcing us to face the question I earlier posed: Why, in a situation, every aspect of which emphasizes the importance of a vigorous, widespread research and development program, we do not yet have it?